REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the previous amendments and the following remarks.

New independent claims 65 and 67 constitute previous claims 17 and 33, respectively, written in independent form, although claim 65 is recited as directed to the combination of a vessel and first and second stabilizer assemblies in order to avoid the indefiniteness noted in section 1 of the Office Action. Since claims 17 and 33 were indicted as directed to allowable subject matter, it is submitted that claims 65 and 67 are allowable.

New dependent claims 66 and 68 correspond to claims 18 and 34, which depended from claims 17 and 33, respectively.

Independent claims 1, 28, 55, 58 and 59 have been amended to recite a combination of a vessel and stabilizer assemblies, to deal with the issue raised in section no. 1 of the Office Action. The description has been amended to provide antecedent basis for the term "hull" now used in some of the claims.

Claims 2 and 3 have been amended to deal with the issue raised in section no. 2 of the Office Action.

Claims 26, 42 and 57, which were rejected in section no. 3, have been cancelled.

All of the independent claims have been rejected over various combinations of prior art references.

Imaizumi in view of Seward

Each of claims 1, 28, 55 and 59 stands rejected over Imaizumi in view of Seward. However, each of those claims recites that the at least one partially hollow

body comprises at least one "closed" ballast tank. Neither Imaizumi nor Seward discloses an at least partly hollow body comprising at least one closed space. In Imaizumi, neither the pans A nor the presumable solid weight E constitutes an at least partially hollow body comprising a closed ballast tank. Likewise, in Seward, the presumably-solid weight 13 does not define a closed ballast tank.

Moreover, neither of those references discloses a closed tank (or space) of "adjustable ballast", as recited in each of claims 1, 28, 55 and 59. Such a feature enables the damping effect to be varied in accordance with wave characteristics, as explained in the paragraph bridging pages 6 and 7 of the application.

Furthermore, each of claims 1 and 28 also recites that the suspending means of each of the first and second stabilizer assemblies is extendable below a water line of the vessel, and that the top of the suspending means of the first stabilizer assembly is connected to a top of the second stabilizer means by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel. Similarly, claim 55 recites that the at least two partially hollow bodies are suspended by respective first and second suspending means which extend below a water line of the vessel, and that the tops of those suspending means are connected together by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel.

As explained in the paragraph bridging pages 8 and 9 of the application, the connection between the tops of the first and second stabilizer means can be direct or indirect. A direct connection is inherently structurally separate from the vessel. As regards an indirect connection, it is explained in that paragraph that an indirect connection would be made separate from the vessel structure. The connection between the first and second stabilizer assemblies provides a considerable

advantage relating to the manner in which the load of the stabilizer assemblies is applied to the vessel. If, instead of being connected together by a connection structurally separate from the vessel as claimed, the tops of the stabilizer assemblies were fixed to the respective port and starboard sides of the vessel, each stabilizer assembly would apply not only a vertical force at the fixation point, but also a considerable moment or force couple, requiring that the fixation points be heavily engineered. However, by connecting the stabilizer assemblies together by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel, the application of the strong moments is avoided. Accordingly, even if the stabilizing assemblies of the Imaizumi and Seward references are considered to be connected together indirectly through the vessel, claims 1, 28, 55 and 59 still distinguish thereover since those claims recite that the connection is independent of the vessel.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claims 1, 28, 55 and 59 distinguish patentably over Imaizumi in view of Seward.

Poldervaart in view of JP '681

Claim 55 stands rejected over Poldervaart in view of JP '681. However, neither of those documents discloses first and second suspending means connected together by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel as recited in claim 55.

Furthermore, it is not deemed obvious to modify Poldervaart in view of JP '681 in the manner proposed in the Office Action for the following reason. JP '681 discloses an anchor for a vessel which is required to be very heavy i.e., much heavier than bodies used as stabilizing bodies such as in Poldervaart. Although the anchor of JP '681 would benefit from the use of the ballast tank 2 to reduce the load

of the heavy anchor, there would be no obvious need to provide the much lighter weights 78 of Poldervaart with ballast chambers to facilitate their transport.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claim 55 distinguishes patentably over Poldervaart in view of JP '681.

Gruber

Claim 55 stands rejected as anticipated by Gruber.

However, claim 55 recites that the first and second suspending means are connected together by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel. In Gruber, the suspending means 24 are interconnected through the vessel.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 55 distinguishes patentably over Gruber.

Manning

Claim 55 stands rejected as anticipated by Manning. However, Manning's suspending means 15 are not connected together by a connection which is structurally separate from the vessel as recited in claim 55.

Claim 58 has also been rejected as anticipated by Manning. However, claim 58 now recites that the elongate flexible suspending means is capable of bearing tension loads of more than one hundred times the loads it is capable of bearing in compression (see pg. 6, l. 7-10 of the description, and original claim 10). That clearly distinguishes claim 58 from Manning in which the arms 15 are designed to support the main hull 13 of the vessel completely above the water (col. 5, l. 1-3) and thus must possess substantial compressive strength. The claimed suspending means does not provide that type of compression strength.

Accordingly, it is submitted that claim 55 distinguishes patentably over Manning.

In conclusion, it is submitted that all independent claims distinguish patentably over the applied prior art, including the dependent claims. Allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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